

reverted to scrub, with benefits to the HesperIIDae, Pieridae (such as the Giant Orange Tip *Hebomoia glaucippe*), and Polyommataini; no doubt tree cover will eventually re-establish itself. High value commercial vegetable crops now cover the other half. All the villagers have moved out of the countryside. Who wants to feed himself by laboriously growing rice, when he can earn a modern income in the great city, and feed himself from surpluses grown much more efficiently elsewhere?

On the other hand, a great city needs recreational country areas, preserved from the depredations of human activity, not least because the reservoirs need clean catchments, and the high rise concrete needs protection from bare hillsides which may collapse in typhoons.

Consequently, many steep slopes have had afforestation programmes for decades, and places like Pai Po Kau Nature Reserve are approaching maturity in the re-growth of native species. Areas like Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens, where the annual species count is around 160, are a haven for many butterflies. Most Chinese back yards have citrus bushes, with remarkable results for the swallowtail fauna.

Nor need one worry overmuch that crowds of people will damage the country parks. These places still have pythons, king cobras and other discouraging fauna which are protected by law, and with which the average city dweller would not want to argue. One can still die of exposure in the mountains of the New Territories, if one tries hard enough!

The daughter who is still in Hong Kong reports that, with the transfer of sovereignty to China, little seems likely to change for the time being. Indeed, other parts of China may well follow the Hong Kong model.—TIM DENING, 20 Vincent Road, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 9DQ.

Eumichtis lichenea Hb. (Lep.: Noctuidae) in north-west Kent

A perfect specimen appeared at my garden m.v. light at Dartford on 26.ix.1997, to be followed by two more, one on each of the following two nights, all males. Plant (1993, *Larger Moths of the London Area*) quotes the six previous records for the region, the first in 1969, and including one specimen for north-west Kent in 1991. Chalmers-Hunt (1996, *The Butterflies and Moths of Kent*) notes that the species appeared to be extending its range, particularly inland, and in a supplement in *Ent. Record* 1980 (p.250) indicates a colonisation westwards along the north Kent coast, numerous specimens being recorded from the Isle of Sheppey from 1975 onwards, and in that year it was also noted at Sittingbourne on the nearby Kent mainland.

The specimens recorded at Dartford this year are by no means the only ones noted in north-west Kent in 1997, and the evidence points to all these moths being of local origin, possibly within the London area, ie. within twenty miles from central London.

It is instructive to find that Edward Newman (1974, *An Illustrated Natural History of British Moths*) portrays the species as being largely south-western in distribution, and omitted mention of the south-east, and Barrett (1987, *The Lepidoptera of the*

British Islands) states that *E. lichenea* was “apparently very rare in south-east England, and scarce in Sussex”. With the first Kent record being as late as 1875, for Folkestone, it seems that the comparatively late colonisation of the Kent coast has not ended, and today is continuing, including westwards up the Thames estuary.— B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

***Lampropteryx suffumata* D.&S. (Lep.: Geometridae) in February**

I was very surprised to take a specimen of the Water Carpet *Lampropteryx suffumata* in my m.v. trap here on 24 February 1988, since the species usually appears here in mid-April, my earliest previous record being for 1 April 1997. Although I have found references to emergences as late as July, I have seen no mention of March or February. The night of 24 February was, significantly, mild, with five other species putting in first appearances for the year. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that at least two possible foodplants were in evidence here at that early time.— ALASDAIR ASTON, Wake's Cottage, 1 The Street, Selborne, Hampshire GU34 3JH.

Recent records of *Fedalmia headleyella* (Staint.) (Lep.: Nepticulidae) in Wiltshire

On 22 September 1996 my brother and I visited the Imber Ranges (VC8) on Salisbury Plain for a spell of general recording and collecting. Whilst investigating a section of broken ground on a west-facing escarpment at grid ref. ST9349 we noted a very compact cluster of *Prunella vulgaris* seedlings. It was immediately obvious that one of the leaves was purple in colour and closer inspection revealed that it was mined. As we had not previously encountered *F. headleyella* we tentatively assumed this was the species concerned. An investment of about one hour in searching revealed no other mines.

On the following weekend, 29 September, I was able once more to gain access to these Ranges and at ST9348 I found another tenanted plant. More searching at this site proved futile.

From these two tenanted plants we were very pleased to breed out, on 5 June 1997, two female *F. headleyella*.

On 20 September 1997 at ST9046 we found another tenanted plant and again further searching was in vain.

Whilst in correspondence with Mr Stephen Palmer concerning his work on the compilation of a list of the Wiltshire microlepidoptera the above-mentioned discoveries prompted me to enquire as to the previously known records of *F. headleyella* with the county. There appears to be only two known records (and I quote the data in full as supplied by Stephen) “Thrup Wood (VC7) 1 July 1877, from the Marlborough College List”, and the second, “From A.M. Emmet (*pers. comm.*). A VC8 record in 1977 from Mr S.C. Scarsdale-Brown (location unknown).”

Evidently *F. headleyella* has long been established in Wiltshire and probably substantially under-recorded. The map references I quoted above indicate a satisfactory distribution on the Imber Ranges and as these are the only locations which my brother and I have searched for *F. headleyella* and considering that *P. vulgaris* is a common enough plant I think it not unreasonable to assume that this